

Appl. No.: 09/956,998

Amdt. dated December 16, 2004

Reply to Communication of December 16, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A masked expression cassette comprising a double stranded nucleic acid molecule wherein a first strand comprises an RNA sequence which codes for a protein of interest linked downstream of a flanking sequence ~~having at least a portion of a target polynucleotide sequence~~, and a translation initiation site operably inserted upstream of the RNA sequence; and,  
a second strand bound to the flanking sequence, wherein said second strand comprises a polynucleotide complementary to said first strand and to a target molecule, further wherein said cassette comprises a 7-methyl guanine cap linked to the 5' end of the flanking sequence.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) The cassette of claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1, wherein said protein of interest comprises a toxin selected from the group consisting of Pseudomonas exotoxin A, ribonuclease, Barnase toxin, Pertussis toxin, and cholera toxin.

4. (currently amended) A masked expression cassette comprising a double stranded nucleic acid molecule comprising a first strand comprising a 5' sense sequence and a 3' sense sequence;

said first strand further comprising an RNA sequence which codes for a protein of interest linked downstream of said 5' sense sequence, and a translation initiation site operably inserted upstream of the RNA sequence; and,

~~[[the]]~~ a second strand bound to said 5' sense sequence and to said 3' sense sequence, wherein said second strand comprises a polynucleotide complementary to said 5' sense sequence and to said 3' sense sequence and to a target molecule.

5. (original) The cassette of claim 4, wherein said cassette further comprises a 7-methyl guanine cap linked to the 5' end of said nucleic acid molecule.

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6. (original) The cassette of claim 5, wherein said protein of interest comprises a toxin selected from the group consisting of *Pseudomonas* exotoxin A, ribonuclease, Barnase toxin, Pertussis toxin, and cholera toxin.

7. (previously presented) A masked expression cassette comprising a double stranded nucleic acid molecule wherein a first strand comprises an RNA sequence which codes for a protein of interest linked downstream of a plurality of sense sequences, and a translation initiation site operably inserted upstream of the RNA sequence; and,

a plurality of second strands, each bound to an individual sense sequence, wherein each of said second strands comprises a nucleotide sequence complementary to one of said sense sequences and to a target molecule.

8. (original) The cassette of claim 7, wherein said cassette further comprises a 7-methyl guanine cap linked to the 5' end of said nucleic acid molecule.

9. (original) The cassette of claim 8, wherein said protein of interest comprises a toxin selected from the group consisting of *Pseudomonas* exotoxin A, ribonuclease, Barnase toxin, Pertussis toxin, and cholera toxin.

10. (previously presented) The cassette of claim 8, wherein each of said sense sequences comprises a distinct nucleotide sequence and each of said second strands comprises a nucleotide sequence complementary to one of said distinct sense sequences and to a distinct target molecule.

11. (original) The cassette of claim 8 having two sense sequences and two second strands.

12. (original) The cassette of claim 8 having three sense sequences and three second strands.